



# Department of Justice

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## **FIVE BLACKWATER EMPLOYEES INDICTED ON MANSLAUGHTER AND WEAPONS CHARGES FOR FATAL NISUR SQUARE SHOOTING IN IRAQ**

*-- A Sixth Blackwater Employee Pleads Guilty for His Role in the Shooting --*

WASHINGTON – A 35-count indictment was unsealed today in the District of Columbia charging five Blackwater security guards with voluntary manslaughter, attempt to commit manslaughter, and weapons violations for their alleged roles in the Sept. 16, 2007, shooting at Nisur Square in Baghdad, Iraq. The defendants are charged with killing 14 unarmed civilians and wounding 20 other individuals.

In addition, a sixth Blackwater security guard pleaded guilty on Dec. 5, 2008, to charges of voluntary manslaughter and attempt to commit manslaughter for his role in the Sept. 16, 2007, shooting at Nisur Square. This guilty plea was also unsealed today.

The indictment against the five defendants and the guilty plea by a sixth defendant were announced today by Patrick Rowan, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; Jeffrey A. Taylor, United States Attorney for the District of Columbia; and Joseph Persichini, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge, FBI Washington Field Office.

The indictment, which was returned under seal on Dec. 4, 2008, charges **Paul A. Slough**, age 29, of Keller, Texas; **Nicholas A. Slatten**, age 24, of Sparta, Tennessee; **Evan S. Liberty**, age 26, of Rochester, New Hampshire; **Dustin L. Heard**, age 27, of Maryville, Tennessee; and **Donald W. Ball**, age 26, of West Valley City, Utah. Each of the defendants is charged with 14 counts of voluntary manslaughter, 20 counts of attempt to commit manslaughter, and one count of using and discharging a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

The defendants, who surrendered to federal authorities this morning in Utah, are scheduled to appear today in federal court in Salt Lake City at 1:30 pm (Mountain Time). If convicted of the charges against them, the defendants face a potential maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment for each count of manslaughter, seven years of imprisonment for each count of attempt to commit manslaughter, and a mandatory minimum imprisonment of 30 years for the firearm count.

The indictment represents the first prosecution under the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA) to be filed against non-Defense Department private contractors, which

was not possible prior to the 2004 amendments to MEJA that specifically expanded the reach of MEJA to non-Defense Department contractors who provide services “in support of the mission of the Department of Defense overseas.”

“The government alleges in the documents unsealed today that at least 34 unarmed Iraqi civilians, including women and children, were killed or injured without justification or provocation by these Blackwater security guards in the shooting at Nisur Square. Today’s indictment and guilty plea demonstrate that those who engage in unprovoked and illegal attacks on civilians, whether during times of conflict or times of peace, will be held accountable,” said Patrick Rowan, Assistant Attorney General for National Security.

“We honor the brave service of the many U.S. contractors who are employed to support the mission of our Armed Forces in extremely difficult circumstances. Today, we honor that service by holding accountable the very few individuals who abused that employment by committing some very serious crimes against dozens of innocent civilians,” stated Jeff Taylor, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

“Today’s indictments illustrate the FBI’s expanded responsibilities and its dedication to respond to any crime scene; be it in the United States or on foreign soil. The FBI will continue to work with its law enforcement partners in this country and abroad to ensure that the nation’s federal laws are enforced,” said Joseph Persichini, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge, FBI Washington Field Office.

According to the indictment, the defendants were all employed by the Armed Forces outside the United States -- that is, the defendants were employed as independent contractors and employees of Blackwater Worldwide, a contractor of the Department of State, to provide personal security services related to supporting the mission of the Department of Defense in the Republic of Iraq, within the meaning of MEJA.

All events alleged in the indictment took place outside of the jurisdiction of any particular State or district and within the venue of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, as provided by 18 U.S.C. § 3238.

Counts 1-14 of the indictment charge the defendants with committing voluntary manslaughter by killing the following individuals: 1) Amed Haithem Ahmed Al Rubia’y, 2) Mahassin Mohssen Kadhum Al-Khazali, 3) Osama Fadhil Abbas, 4) Ali Mohammed Hafedh Abdul Razzaq, 5) Mohamed Abbas Mahmoud, 6) Qasim Mohamed Abbas Mahmoud, 7) Sa’adi Ali Abbas Alkarkh, 8) Mushtaq Karim Abd Al-Razzaq, 9) Ghaniyah Hassan Ali, 10) Ibrahim Abid Ayash, 11) Hamoud Sa’eed Abttan, 12) Uday Ismail Ibrahiem, 13) Mahdi Sahib Nasir, and 14) Ali Khalil Abdul Hussein.

Counts 15 through 34 of the indictment charge the defendants with attempting to commit manslaughter by attempting to kill the following 20 additional individuals who were wounded as a result of the shooting: 15) Majed Salman Abdel Kareem Al-Gharbawi; 16) Jennan Hafidh Abid al-Razzaq; 17) Yasmin Abdul Kidr Salhe; 18) Mohanad Wadhnah; 19) Haydar Ahmad Rabie

Hussain Al-Khafaji; 20) Hassan Jaber Salman; 21) Farid Walid Hasoun Al-Kasab; 22) Abdul Amir Raheem Jihan Yasser; 23) Wisam Raheem Fliah Hasan Al-Miri; 24) Talib Mutluk Diwan; 25) Adel Jaber Sham'ma Al-Jadiri; 26) Nasir Hamzah Latif Al-Rikabi; 27) Mahdi Abid Khider Abbas Al-Faraji; 28) Abdul Wahab Abdul Qadar Al-Qalamchi; 29) Bara Sadoon Ismail Al-Ani; 30) Sami Hawa Hamud Al-Sabahin; 31) Fawziyyah Aliwi Hassoon; 32) Ali Hadi Naji Al-Rubaie; 33) Alah Majeed Sghair Zaidi; and 34) Jassim Mohammad Hashim.

Count 35 of the indictment charges the defendants with knowingly using and discharging firearms, that is, an SR-25 sniper rifle; machine guns (M-4 assault rifles and M-240 machine guns); and destructive devices (M-203 grenade launchers and grenades), during and in relation to a crime of violence for which each of them may be prosecuted in a court of the United States.

Also announced today was the unsealing of a guilty plea by Jeremy P. Ridgeway, age 35, of California. On Dec. 5, 2008, Ridgeway pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia before U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina to a superseding criminal information charging him with voluntary manslaughter and attempt to commit manslaughter for his role in the September 16, 2007, shooting at Nisur Square. A sentencing date has not been set by the court.

This investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The Iraqi Ministry of Interior and the Iraqi National Police also provided cooperation and assistance in the investigation.

The prosecution is being handled Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kenneth C. Kohl and Jonathan M. Malis from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, as well as Barry Jonas, Trial Attorney from the Justice Department's National Security Division.

The public is reminded that an indictment is merely a formal charging document notifying a defendant of the charges against him or her. All defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

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